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## President Lincoln's Speech.

Numbers of persons assembled in front of the President's House in Washington, last night, and upon their call, the President came out, and addressed them. After an allusion to the causes of the rejoicing, &c, he went on to discuss the subject of the reconstruction of Louisiana, and his action heretofore as that state, and then proceeded as follows:

"We all agree that the seceded States, so called, are out of their proper practical relation with the Union; and that the sole object of the Government, civil and military, in regard to those States, is to again get them into that proper practical relation. I believe it is not only possible, but in fact easier to do this, without deciding or even considering whether these States have ever been out of the Union, than with it. Finding themselves safely at home, it would be utterly immaterial whether they had ever been abroad. Let us join in doing the acts necessary to restoring the proper practical relations between these States and the Union; and each forever after innocently indulge his own opinion whether, in doing the acts, he brought the States from without into the Union, or only gave them proper assistance, they never having been out of it.

The amount of constituency, so to speak, on which the new Louisiana government rests, would be more satisfactory to all, if it contained fifty, thirty, or even twenty thousand, instead of only about twelve thousand, as it really does. It is also unsatisfactory to some, that the elective franchise is not given to the colored man. I would myself prefer that it were now conferred on the very intelligent, and on those who serve our cause as soldiers. Still the question is not whether the Louisiana government, as it stands, is quite all that is desirable. The question is, 'Will it be wiser to take it as it is, and help to improve it; or to reject and disperse it?' 'Can Louisiana be brought into proper practical relation with the Union sooner by sustaining, or by discarding her new State government.'

Some twelve thousand voters in the heretofore slave State of Louisiana have sworn allegiance to the Union; assumed to be the rightful political power of the State; held elections; organized a free government; adopted a free State constitution, giving the benefit of public schools equally to black and white, and empowering the Legislature to confer the elective franchise upon the colored man. Their Legislature has already voted to ratify the constitutional amendment, recently passed by Congress, abolishing slavery throughout the nation. These twelve thousand persons are thus fully committed to the Union, and to perpetual freedom in the States—committed to the very things, and nearly all the things, the nation wants—and they ask the nation's recognition and its assistance to make good that committal.

Now, if we reject and spurn them, we do our utmost to disorganize and disperse them. We in effect say to the white man, 'You are worthless, or worse; we will neither help you nor be helped by you.' To the blacks, we say, 'This cup of liberty which these, your old masters, hold to your lips, we will dash from you, and leave you to the chances of gathering the spilled and scattered contents, in some vague and undefined when, where, and how.' If this

course, discouraging and paralyzing both white and black, has any tendency to bring Louisiana into proper practical relations with the Union, I have, so far, been unable to perceive it.

If, on the contrary, we recognize and sustain the new government of Louisiana, the converse of all this is made true. We encourage the hearts and nerve the arms of the twelve thousand to adhere to their work, and argue for it and proselyte for it, and fight for it, and feed it, and grow it, and ripen it to a complete success. The colored man, too, seeing all united for him is inspired with vigilance, and energy, and daring to the same end. Grant that he desires the elective franchise. Will he not attain it sooner by saving the already advanced steps toward it than by running backward over them? Concede that the new government of Louisiana is only to what it should be as the egg is to the fowl, we shall sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it. [Laughter.]

Again, if we reject Louisiana, we also reject our vote in favor of the proposed amendment to the national Constitution. To meet this proposition it has been argued that no more than three-fourths of those States which have not attempted secession are necessary to validly ratify the amendment. I do not commit myself against this, further than to say that such a ratification would be questionable, and sure to be persistently questioned; while a ratification by three fourths of all the States would be unquestioned and unquestionable.

I repeat the question: 'Can Louisiana be brought into proper practical relation with the Union sooner by sustaining or by discarding her new State government?' What has been said of Louisiana will apply generally to other States. And yet so great peculiarities pertain to each State; and such important and sudden changes occur in the same State; and withal, so new and unprecedented is the whole case, that no exclusive and inflexible plan can safely be prescribed as to details and collaterals. Such exclusive and inflexible plan would surely become a new entanglement. Important principles may, and must, be inflexible.

In the present situation, as the phrase goes, it may be my duty to make some new announcement to the people of the South. I am considering, and shall not fail to act, when satisfied that action will be proper."

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jan 6—4m

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ap 5—1m

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WM. ARNOLD,  
JOHN A. FIELD.

jan 7—tf

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Jan. 3—tf

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T. L. SANBORN,

jan 3—tf

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feb 7—tf

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jan 3—tf

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mh 21—tf